

during his journey in the Kimberleys in Western Australia. This specimen (SMF 57 138) had been caught near Ivanhoe at the Ord River on November 23, 1959. It agrees completely with typical *Varanus semiremex* of Queensland except with regard to its relatively longer tail. The tip of the tail being damaged, the tail is nevertheless 1.78 times as long as the head and body (instead of 1.34-1.60 in specimens from Queensland). The proportion of the distances between the nares and tip of snout and the nares and the eye is 1 : 1.3 (in specimen SMF 53 259 from Woodstock, Queensland, the ratio is 1 : 1.34). There are no well differentiated supraoculars, 51 scutes from left to right angle of mouth counted around the head, 103 scutes around the body, and 84 transverse rows of ventral shields. The ground colour of the upper side is a dark grey with many light grey dots, some of them ocellated with black. The dorsal face of the head shows no pattern except a light dot in the pineal area, the temporal region shows a light longitudinal band. The upper side of the legs is dotted lightly, the dorsal face of the tail unicoloured black. The ventral side of this specimen is whitish with grey cross-bars, these being more distinct in the anterior part of the body. Compared with SMF 53 259 which has no light dorsal dots, the Western Australian specimen seems to retain a more juvenile pattern.

Measurements: head and body, 235 mm.; tail, 420 + ? mm.; fore-leg, 56 mm.; hind-leg, 77 mm.; length of head, 43.2 mm.; breadth of head, 22.5 mm.; height of head, 19.3 mm.; snout, 19.2 mm.; distance nares - tip of snout 7.3 mm.; distance nares - anterior border of eye, 9.5 mm.

With the discovery of *Varanus semiremex* there are now six species of monitor lizards known from the Kimberleys. It can be expected that the area of its distribution covers the northern part of the Northern Territory, too.

#### Literature cited:

- Glauert, L. 1951. A new *Varanus* from East Kimberley. *West. Austral. Naturalist*, 3: 14-16.  
Mertens, R. 1958. Bemerkungen über die Warane Australiens. *Senckenb. biol.*, Frankfurt, 39: 229-264.

—ROBERT MERTENS, Senckenberg Natural History Museum, Frankfurt, a. M.

**Display in the Musk Duck.**—The following observations were made on a male Musk Duck (*Biziura lobata*) at one of the Perry's Lakes near Reabold Hill on August 28, 1960.

The bird had two distinctive calls, one a hissing whistle and the other a metallic "plonk." Accompanying the calls were distinctive movements of the head, wings and tail which, owing to their being employed in a different sequence for the different calls, can be used to anticipate which call the bird is going to give. The normal "rest" position of the bird appeared to be with the head back over the body, the lobe just touching the surface of the water and the tail at an angle of approximately 30° to the horizontal. When swimming around while feeding, or when disturbed, the body was almost

completely submerged and the tail was flattened out on the water.

Upon my uttering a whistle similar to the "hissing whistle" the bird disengaged from its feeding activities and started up a display of "hissing" and "plonking."

When preparing to whistle the bird stretches out its neck, the beak of the bird being at an angle of approximately  $45^\circ$  and lobe touching the water, and raises the fanned out tail over the back until it is almost in a horizontal position. The bird then flaps its wings and shoots out a spray of water on both sides of the body. The tail is then flattened down on to the back and, simultaneously, the whistle is given, the beak opening only slightly. The bird then relaxes and assumes the rest position before continuing the performance. The bird continually moves around while whistling and no two successive calls are uttered in the same direction. When the bird is reasonably close the sound of the water shot out from the wings can be heard immediately preceding the whistle.

The preliminary antics for the metallic plonk are the same as for the whistle, with the bird stretching out its neck, the lobe touching the water and the beak angled at  $45^\circ$ . Procedure from this position may follow one of two patterns: (a) With the tail at approximately  $45^\circ$  the bird flaps its wings as before. The tail is then jerked to a near vertical position and the plonk simultaneously uttered. Sometimes the tail is carried through past the vertical and angled over the back. (b) The tail is raised to a near vertical position. The wings are then flapped and, following this action, the tail is brought sharply up over the back and at the same time the call is emitted. The splash of the water is not so easily distinguished from the bird's call as in the whistle.

The bird when feeding adopted the submerged position but at times allowed the tail to rise up to an angle of approximately  $10^\circ$ . Preceding each dive the tail, regardless of whether it was flat or angled, was quickly raised a few inches and then lowered to its original position. The time that the bird stayed under water while feeding appeared to be rather constant and in the vicinity of 25 seconds. When surfacing the bird noticeably pauses with its head and neck above the water and its body completely submerged before it comes up to the submerged position.

The Musk Duck under observation was warned off by one of a pair of Black Swans with 5 eygnets but neither of the birds appeared unduly worried by the other.

—R. H. STRANGER, Wembley.

## CORRECTIONS

In the paper on the Red-eared Firetail by Klaus Immelmann (*W.A. Nat.*, no. 6) the following corrections are necessary:

P. 143, line 11: insert "not" between "also" and "possess."

P. 150: line 10 from bottom: insert "or song" between "any call" and "during."